

A Study of **JEREMIAH**



Lesson Seven – Chapters 29-32

LETTER TO THE EXILES

Jeremiah 29:1-23



- From:** Jeremiah, God's Prophet
- To:** The Exiles in Babylon; Taken away with Jehoiakim and Jehoiachin (Daniel saw this letter – Dan 9:1-2)
- Date:** In the Days of Zedekiah, the Last King of Judah
- Via:** Elasah and Gemariah, King Zedekiah's Messengers
- Ref:** Jer 29:1-23; Dan 1:1-6; 2 Kings 24:12-16

ADAPT, SURVIVE, PROSPER

Jeremiah 29:4-7

- Hananiah (28:4) and others (29:15) said, 'Don't worry; the exile will only be two years then things will be back to normal.'
 - What effect would believing such a lie have on the exiles? (2Thes 2:1, 3:6-12?)
- Jeremiah told them that, in truth, the exile would last 70 years (29:10). This was by the hand of God (v4, 7). As a result they were to:
 - Build houses (v5)
 - Plant gardens (v5)
 - Marry and have children (v6) – so they would not be diminished
 - Taken into captivity – 4,600 (Jer 52:28-30 – men only?)
 - Returned from captivity – More than 42,000 (Ezra 2:64)

ADAPT, SURVIVE, PROSPER

Jeremiah 29:4-7

The exiles were to be good citizens.

“And (1) seek the peace of the city where I have caused you to be carried away captive, and (2) pray to the LORD for it; for in its peace you will have peace” (Jer 29:7).

What about modern-day 'exiles?'

1Pet 2:1 – Rom 13:1-7

THOUGHTS OF PEACE & HOPE

Jeremiah 29:10-14

- This 70-years of exile was by the very hand of God (v4, 7). It was evidence of God's total rejection of Judah, right? Not at all!
 - "Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel: 'Like these good figs, so will I acknowledge those who are carried away captive from Judah, whom I have sent out of this place **for their own good**, into the land of the Chaldeans. **'For I will set My eyes on them for good**, and I will bring them back to this land; I will build them and not pull them down, and I will plant them and not pluck them up' (24:5-6).
 - "...After seventy years are completed at Babylon, I will visit you and perform My good word toward you, and cause you to return to this place. **For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the LORD, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope**" (29:10-11).

JUDAH'S RESPONSIBILITY IN OBTAINING DELIVERANCE

Jeremiah 29:1-23

- The 70-years were to chasten the people and bring their hearts back to the Lord so that, when this time was up:
 - "Then you will call upon Me and go and pray to Me, and I will listen to you" (29:12)
 - "And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart. I will be found by you, says the LORD, and I will bring you back from your captivity; I will gather you from all the nations and from all the places where I have driven you, says the LORD, and I will bring you to the place from which I cause you to be carried away captive.
 - Daniel prayed and sought the Lord just as Jeremiah describes in this context (Dan 9:2-19)

CURSES

Jeremiah 29:15-23

- On those who refused to submit to Nebuchadnezzar and stayed in Jerusalem (15-19)
- On those who voiced false prophecies in Babylon (21-23)

SHEMAIAH WRITES BACK FROM EXILE

Jeremiah 29:24-29

To: The religious leaders back in Jerusalem

From: Shemaiah, a false priest in exile

God made you priests for a reason – to stop the mouths of crazy false prophets

And Jeremiah's letters prove that he is one of them

So do your job!



GOD'S ANSWER TO SHEMAIAH

Jeremiah 29:24-29

The Lord said through Jeremiah's second letter to those in Babylonian exile:

"Because Shemaiah has prophesied to you, and I have not sent him, and he has caused you to trust in a lie... [and] "because he has taught rebellion against the LORD"

"Behold, I will punish Shemaiah the Nehelamite and his family: he shall not have anyone to dwell among this people, nor shall he see the good that I will do for My people"

PROMISE OF RESTORATION

Jeremiah 30:1-9

- "Thus speaks the LORD God of Israel, saying: 'Write in a book for yourself all the words that I have spoken to you" (v1-2).
- "Concerning [the restoration of] Israel and Judah." (v4)
- **A terrible day of judgment is coming for Babylon.** "Alas! For that day is great, so that none is like it; and it is [even] the time of Jacob's trouble" (v5-7)
- **"But he** [Jacob – i.e., Israel] **shall be saved out of it.**" (v7).
 - "I will break his yoke from your neck, And will burst your bonds" (v8)
 - Foreigners shall no more enslave them. But they shall serve the LORD their God, and **David their king, whom I will raise up for them**" (v8-9).

PROMISE OF RESTORATION

Jeremiah 30:1-9

Understanding this Prophecy

- Like much prophecy, it looks to a near-term fulfillment that pre-figures or shadows the ultimate fulfillment in the work of Christ the Messiah. [It is not either Babylon or Christ, it is both]
 - Deliverance from the current Babylonian bondage is coming in less than 70 years
 - But of much more significance was the deliverance from the bondage of sin that was to come when “David their king” – that is, Christ, was raised up

ABOUT GOD'S JUSTICE

Jeremiah 30:10-15

- **Initiated by sin** – Judah had a “multitude of iniquities” that were only increasing (v15, 15)
- **God is just and cannot ignore sin** – God’s justice demands punishment for such sin (v11)
- **God is fair. All sinners will see His justice** – Not just of Judah but the other nations also (v11)
- **God had a plan for Judah** He promised not completely destroy Judah (v11)
- **God is compassionate** – He said that their chastening would not last forever (v10-11)

THE BALM OF GILEAD

Jeremiah 30:12-16

“Is there no balm in Gilead, Is there no physician there? Why then is there no recovery For the health of the daughter of my people?” (Jer 30:22)

“For thus says the LORD: ‘Your affliction is incurable, Your wound is severe.’¹³ There is no one to plead your cause [Job 9:33], That you may be bound up; You have no healing medicines ...¹⁴ For I have wounded you with the wound of an enemy, ... For the multitude of your iniquities, Because your sins have increased” (Jer 30:12-14)

The wounds of the Lord's cannot be cured by man.

But they can be cured by the blood of Jesus (Isa 53).

So we sing, “There is a balm in Gilead to make the wounded whole. There is a balm in Gilead to heal the sin-sick soul.”

And. “The great physician now is here...”

“YOU SHALL BE MY PEOPLE AND I WILL BE YOUR GOD”

Jeremiah 30:22

- Describes the relationship God wants to have with His people – with **ALL** people
 - A relationship circumscribed by His covenant – with promises, laws, and consequences
 - This phrase first voiced in Egypt to the enslaved Israelites (Ex 6:1-7)
- This was **NEVER** true of the nation of Israel as a whole (Hos 1:9)
- **But the prophets spoke of a future time when God would finally have a special covenant people** (Jer 7:23, 30:22, 31:1, 33; Joel 2:27). **This referred to Christians in His church.**

THE VALUE OF PROPHECY

Jeremiah 30:24

- When Jeremiah prophesied of Israel's restoration, what would be the impact on the Jews of his day?
 - Hope?
 - Full understanding of the things prophesied? (1Peter 1:10-12)
 - Faith in Jeremiah's words as being inspired?
 - What would have to be true for Jeremiah's prophecies to produce faith?
- Jeremiah wrote, "In the latter days you will consider it" (v24)
 - What might be the result of looking back at Jeremiah's prophecies "in the latter days"?

THE RESTORATION OF ISRAEL

Jeremiah 31:1-22

- "At the same time" (31:1)
 - "In the latter days" (30:24)
 - When restoration comes to Judah through the Son of David – Christ (30:9)
- The Lord will have a covenant relationship with ALL true Jews – Not just those of Judah but also of the ten tribes of Israel (31:1)
 - Israel also called Ephraim (7:15, 31:9, 18, 20)
 - They would come from Mount Ephraim to Zion (v6)
 - With repentant hearts (v18-20)
 - And the Lord would bless them with lovingkindness (v3), deliverance (v8), redemption (11), joy (v13), comfort (v13), and hope (v17)

THE RESTORATION OF JUDAH

Jeremiah 31:22-30

- Jeremiah then turns back to the restoration of Judah (v23)
 - Jerusalem would again be a respected center of holiness (23)
 - And the entire nation would be blessed (v24-28)
- The Lord said, “For I have satiated the weary soul, and I have replenished every sorrowful soul” (v25). “And it shall come to pass, that as I have watched over them to pluck up, to break down, to throw down, to destroy, and to afflict, so I will watch over them to build and to plant, says the LORD” (v28).

A NEW COVENANT

Jeremiah 30:31-34

- Back at Mt Sinai, God had made a covenant with Israel (Ex 19:3-5, 24:3-8, 34:27-28) that called for them to be an obedient and holy people and receive great blessings (Ex 19:5-6)
- But Israel never really kept this covenant (Jer 31:32)
- A **new, different and better** (Heb 8:6) covenant was coming as a part of the restoration that Jeremiah spoke of (v31)
- It was to supersede and replace the old and obsolete covenant (Heb 8:13)
- That new covenant was the **new testament, the gospel of Jesus Christ** (Heb 8:7-10:18, et al.)
- Jeremiah (and the Hebrew writer) explained how this new covenant was to be different from the covenant of Sinai ...

A DIFFERENT COVENANT

Jeremiah 31:31-34

I will put My law in their minds and write it on their hearts

- Under the Old Covenant
 - born a Jew and under the covenant
 - not necessarily having a knowledge of the law
 - and not necessarily having a deep commitment to it
- Under the New Covenant
 - born a natural man in an earthly kingdom but not physically born into the covenant
 - re-born by choice, through baptism, into the relationship of the new covenant (Rom 6:1-5)
 - called by the gospel (including the new law) to this new birth and into the covenant (2Thes 3:14). So all under this new covenant already know the law
 - With a sincere heart-deep commitment to obedience to the law that results in a new life (2Cor 3:2-3, Rom 6:1-5)

A DIFFERENT COVENANT

Jeremiah 31:31-34

I WILL BE THEIR GOD AND THEY WILL BE MY PEOPLE

- Under the Old Covenant
 - This what God intended since the beginning for all those under the old covenant – for every Jew (Ex 6:7, Lev 26:12)
 - But it never happened – certainly not for the entire nation. They habitually disobeyed the covenant (Jer 31:32)
- Under the New Covenant
 - Finally God will have what He wanted all along – a special relationship with His special people. All who share in this new covenant will strive to meet their obligations under the covenant, will receive its blessings, and will be in fellowship with God (1Jo 1:3, 6; Compare Ex 19:6 with 2Pet 2:9)

A DIFFERENT COVENANT

Jeremiah 31:31-34

- **NO NEED TO TEACH OTHERS UNDER THE COVENANT TO KNOW THE LORD...**
 - **Under the Old Covenant**
 - Jews were under the covenant yet did not know God – either intellectually or as part of an intimate relationship until they were taught about Him and brought into fellowship with Him
 - **Under the New Covenant**
 - No one can come under the new covenant until their have come to know God in a way that produces obedient faith. Every Christian ‘knows God’ (1Jo 2:3-4, 3:1)

A DIFFERENT COVENANT

Jeremiah 31:31-34

I WILL FORGIVE THEIR INIQUITY AND FORGET THEIR SIN

- **Under the Old Covenant**
 - “For the law, having a shadow of the good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with these same sacrifices, which they offer continually year by year, make those who approach perfect. For then would they not have ceased to be offered? For the worshipers, once purified, would have had no more consciousness of sins. But in those sacrifices there is a reminder of sins every year. **For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sins**” (Heb 10:1-3)
- **Under the New Covenant**
 - “But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and **the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin**” (1Jo 1:7)

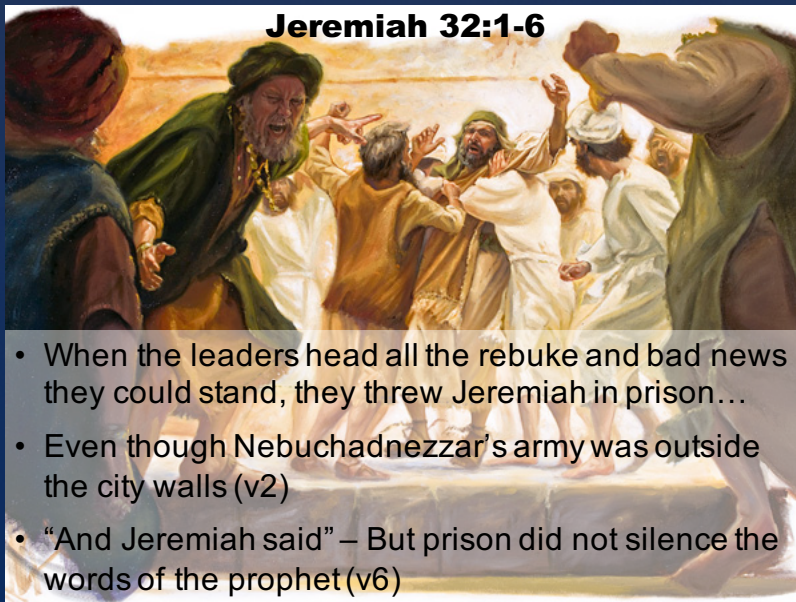
SECURITY FOR ISRAEL

Jeremiah 31:35-40

- The previous words about restoration should provide great hope in the midst of dark days
- By least any doubt His resolve, God states in the strongest words, “I will [not] cast off all the seed of Israel” (v35-37).
- Paul underscores this truth: “I say then, has God cast away His people? Certainly not! For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin. God has not cast away His people whom He foreknew (Rom 11:1-2; foreknew-Rom 8:28-30).
 - He only promised to save a remnant and not all Jews (Jer 31:37; Rom 11:5)
 - The true Jew of the covenant was not a national Jew but rather a Christian – part of the “Israel of God” (Gal 6:16). Paul said, “For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly,” and “...For they are not all Israel who are of Israel,”

JEREMIAH IN PRISON

Jeremiah 32:1-6



- When the leaders head all the rebuke and bad news they could stand, they threw Jeremiah in prison...
- Even though Nebuchadnezzar's army was outside the city walls (v2)
- “And Jeremiah said” – But prison did not silence the words of the prophet (v6)

THE FIELD IN ANATHOTH

Jeremiah 32:6-15

- **The Facts:**
 - Nebuchadnezzar's army surrounded the city– the end was obviously near [In fact, Jerusalem was to fall in about a year]
 - Yet the Lord had Jeremiah buy some land – 17 shekels of silver for a plot in his home city of Anathoth
 - Care was taken to ensure the deed would be preserved
- **Questions:**
 - What was strange about this transaction?
 - What, if anything, made this difficult for Jeremiah (see v25)
 - What message was the Lord sending? (v15)
 - Did he really understand this matter and God's plan?

JEREMIAH'S PRAYER

Jeremiah 32:16-25

- **Jeremiah obeyed and then prayed to ask for an explanation**
 - 'I know that "there is nothing too hard for You"' (v17)
 - 'But things are working out just the way You intended and the city will soon be in the hands of the Babylonians'
 - 'What good will a deed to land be when Jerusalem is captured and I am in exile?'
- **Comment on what you learn about Jeremiah's faith and understanding from this prayer**
 - What suggest a strong faith?
 - What suggest limitations in his faith?

THE LORD'S RESPONSE

Jeremiah 32:26-44

- “Is there anything too hard for Me? (v26)
 - It was certainly not too hard for God to hold Judah accountable for their sin by destroying the city (v28-35)
 - But it was also not too hard for Him to restore His people, to bless them, and enfold them in “an everlasting covenant” (v36-44)
 - And after the exiles had returned there would again be land transactions just as before (v43-44)
- And so God revealed the reason He had Jeremiah buy land. This reason was ...?

LESSONS FOR US

Jeremiah 32:16-25

We do not have to know the ‘why’ of God’s commands in order to obey them (e.g., circumcision, baptism)

We can have confidence that God will keep His promises and will work His purposes even through we cannot see how it will happen (e.g., Abraham)